

REFLECTIONS

UPON

EAST-INDIA SHIPPING.

By SIR RICHARD HOTHAM, Knt.



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MARCH 1801

To the PROPRIETORS of EAST-
INDIA STOCK.

A NONYMOUS Writers sometimes mean, by concealing their Names, to take unwarrantable Liberties in treating their Subject, and also to prevent any personal Attack. As I mean no improper Freedoms, but to keep close to Facts, and the most probable Truths, I think myself as much entitled thus to address the Proprietors of East-India Stock, as other Gentlemen are, that speak from Memory at General Courts, in Leadenhall-street. I therefore commit my Name to the Public, and leave them to judge of the Propriety of the Subject, the Time of Publication, and the Necessity of its being now rightly understood, that for the future such gross Misapplication

application of the Stockholders Money may effectually be prevented. I shall therefore, without further Preface, declare myself to be the Author of the following Reflections.

I am,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

*Parliament-Street,
March 18, 1773.* I R.D. HOTHAM.

REFLECTIONS, &c.

THAT the present *leading Directors* of the East-India affairs have been the cause of much neglect and bad management in the shipping, is a matter unanimously agreed to by all unprejudiced Proprietors—that they have covered that neglect and bad management by following the old office forms, and mischievous precedents, wilfully stalking behind the old charter party for many years, to the manifest injury of the Company, the better to promote the interest of their private friends the builders at Blackwall, as well as other builders and friends elsewhere, whose interest moved in the same line, is as true, as that eighty-eight ships have been lately employed in the Company's service, when half that number were more than sufficient; so that forty sail of the finest merchant ships in Europe (unless a better regulation now takes place) must for the future lay year after year

year in the wet-dock, *rotting*, for the benefit only of ship-builders, rope-makers, &c. by whose influence such *leading Directors* keep their seats in Leadenhall-house; hence comes the necessity for such leading Directors to take into the service more ships than they can employ, consequently are obliged to send out more ships annually than they have freight for;—hence comes it that such ships return dead freighted, to the utter prejudice of the stock-holder and ship-owners;—hence comes the enormous expence of repairing rotten ships, * which incredible expence falls at last very heavy on the Company, and is actually one of the leading causes for the extravagant freights so long paid, which will yet greatly increase, if a stop is not put to it by Parliament; for the real Proprietors cannot controul the Blackwall interest, added to the dependents on such leading Directors. There must be a new mode of chartering, and stationing the ships more agreeable to the fair interest of the real stock-holders, whose advantage ought to be the constant object of every candid, honest Director.

The following reflections on the present state of East-India shipping, are in consequence of some late extraordinary resolutions made by the Court of Directors in January last; viz. That eleven ships was to go to China to fetch home four thousand six hundred and nine net tons of

* Some late ships repairs (with ship-builders only) have cost from five to six and seven thousand pounds each.

goods, which might have been brought home in five of the ships sent out that year; and bad as the old charter party is for the Company's interest, might have been so brought home on the old charter party terms, and would, as follows, evidently have saved the Company $43422l. 13s. 4d.$ upon the eleven ships freight.

The present mode of freighting ships is under the most absurd charter party that ever existed; a fact that no man of common sense will deny, that has ever read it. But, for the present purpose, it will suffice, that I state one fact from it; viz. That all ships in that service are taken up at four hundred and ninety-nine tons, of which eighty tons is to be iron kentridge, taken out, and brought home by way of ballast; so that four hundred and nineteen tons remain of real goods, which four hundred and nineteen tons, at the present freight price of $32l.$ and $29l.$ per ton, as this charter party settles it at last, brings each ship's cargo home at the following rate. *Viz.*

Tons

(8)

Tons.		L. s. d.	L. s. d.
80 Iron Kentledge	at	9 13 4	18
11 China Ware		29 0 0	319 0 0
393 Tea and Silk		32 0 0	12,576 0 0
15 Private Trade		32 0 0	480 0 0
			14,148 6 8
499 The Freight of one China Ship			11
11 Multiplied by the Number of Ships taken up			
5489 Eleven Ships Charter Tonnage			155,631 13 4
880 Eleven Ships Kentledge deducted			
4609 * The net Tonnage brought Home in 11 Ships			
The Amount of Eleven Ships Freight			155,631 13 4

Had the following five ships been sent, the same tonnage and species of goods, with 80 tons of kentledge in each ship, would have been brought home at the following rate, *Viz.*

The freight of the Royal Captain would make up thus:

Tons.		L. s. d.	L. s. d.
80 Kentledge	— at	9 13 4	18
17 China Ware	—	29 0 0	493 0 0
387 Tea and Silk	—	32 0 0	12,384 0 0
			13,650 6 8
484			
15 Private Trade	—	32 0 0	480 0 0
80 Double Kentledge, Ft. Price	10 6 8		1,546 13 4
520 Half Freight	16 0 0		8,320 0 0
1099 By the above Ship, and her Ft. amounts to		23,997	0 0
999 Brought by the Princess Royal,	to	22,397	0 0
999 Brought by the Prime	— to	22,397	0 0
956 Brought by the Bridgewater	— to	21,709	0 0
956 Brought by the Resolution,	— to	21,709	0 0
5009 The Amount of the Five large Ships, Freight as above		112,209	0 0
400 Deduct for Five Ships, Iron Kentledge taken out, and } brought Home as dead Weight, at 80 Tons each. }			
4609 Net Tonnage, the same as brought by the 11 Ships above. *			
Thus in stationing the China Ships only of the present Year } the Company evidently suffered to the Amount of }		43,422 13 4	
			It

(9)

It being established as above
that 4609 net tons brought home
would cost — — — £. 155,631 13 4

The like tonnage 4609 brought
home at 21 £. per ton, agreeable
to the tender lately made by the
three large ships, would amount
to — — —

96,789

This shews the saving to the
Company by employing large
ships in that trade, and abolishing
the old charter party, by giving
each ship as much tonnage as
she could safely bring —

58,842 13 4.

A like proportionable loss necessarily falls on the Bengal ships,
&c. as fourteen are employed instead of seven or eight at most,
which loss I cannot conceive to
be so little as — — —

70,000

Which makes an annual loss to
the Company of — — — £. 128,842 13 4

Some proper notice ought to be taken of the immense illicit private trade, which is most intolerably increased by such a number of ships and multitudes of officers going out and coming home in such empty ships, as must needs invite the whole ship's company to smuggle more than otherwise they would have either thoughts of or had an opportunity of doing, had such ships and officers been kept within proper bounds.

For

It

For if twelve or fourteen ships, would actually have brought home the whole tonnage this year, that the twenty-five ships are chartered for, then there has been a wrong conduct.

The only reasons that can be plausibly suggested are two. First, That seven ships are not sufficient to carry out the soldiers and stores, then necessary to be sent to India. The second excuse that a ship full laden from Bengal would be too rich to be ventured in one bottom.

To the first I answer, that if seven ships were not sufficient to convey all their stores and soldiers, why do they not add the two direct China ships, and send them by way of Madras; which are bound to carry six hundred and sixty six tons, without a shilling expence to the Company; at the same time, would have taken four hundred soldiers on the usual terms to Madras and proceeded on to China.

I conceive this to be a full answer to the first objection.

To the second objection I reply, that whatever surplus cargo may be laden on board one ship, more than the Company chuses to risque, may be insured at the public offices at four per cent. in time of peace, from any part of India; so that such insurance would amount to a mere trifle. For example say 40,000l. at four per cent. would not be forty shillings per ton, and would ill justify taking up a single extra ship at 37 and 40l. per ton, the present year's Bombay freight price.

This

This is my answer to the second objection, and in truth I know of no other.

I wish to shew beyond a doubt, that I mean neither to miscalculate, misguide, or inflame the minds of gentlemen against particular persons, but simply and fairly to state facts in the clearest way, and then leave them who have done such injury to the Company, and other individuals, to make the best atonement they can. I shall proceed by stating a few incontestable facts, with my remarks thereon. First the freight of a China ship for this year with surplus tonnage, the same as last, which was two hundred and twenty tons upon an average above charter party on each ship; so that, at this year's price, at thirty-two pounds and twenty-nine pounds per ton, each ship's freight would make up as follows, viz.

Tons		£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
80 Iron Kentledge	at	9	13	4	is	773	6	8
11 China Ware		29	0	0		319	0	0
393 Silk and China		32	0	0		12,576	0	0

484 Charter party Tonnage					13,668	6	8
Surplus Tonnage							
15 Private Trade		32	0	0	480	0	0
80 At double Kentledge Price		19	6	8	1,546	13	4
125 At half Freight, which is		16	0	0	2,000	0	0

704 One Ship's Freight, with Surplus Tonnage,	17,695	0	0
80 Deduct Iron Kentledge			

624 Net—at £28 7s. 1d. with a Fraction upon the whole Calculate of 480 Pence, amounts to	£. 17,695
This shews had Surplus Tonnage been given this Year, as usual, it would have cost the Company to bring Home each Ton	£. 28 7 1
The late Tender made by the three large Ships	at 21 0 0

Gained to the Company upon every Ton £. 7 7 f
REMARK.

R E M A R K.

This proves a saving of 7l. 7s. 1d. per ton, instead of 4 guineas mentioned in the tender (see p. 23) under the most advantageous state the present charter party affords the Company to bring home their goods, with surplus tonnage.

But by a late resolution of the Honourable Court of Directors, that the eleven ships should return dead freighted, their freight would then make up as follows, viz.

Tons		£. s. d.		£. s. d.
80 Iron Kentledge; at	9 13 4	is	773	6 8
11 China Ware	29 0 0		319	0 0
393 Tea and Silk	32 0 0	12,576	0 0	
15 Private Trade	32 0 0	480	0 0	
				14,148 6 8
499	Deduct Iron Kentledge			
419 Net—at £. 33 15s. 4d. with a Fraction of 2s. amounts to				£. 14,148 6 8

This shews the price for each ton brought home under their late regulation, without any surplus tonnage to be — l. 33 15 4

R E M A R K.

Had the three large ships gone and returned full, each ship would have brought home 1050 tons, consequently the three would bring 3150 tons,

tons, which quantity of tonnage, reckoned at the price above, proved to be - l. 33 15 4

would amount to at l. 33 15 4 - l. 106,365
But the amount of the three large ships, had they brought 3150 tons, at 21 l. would be - 66,150

The real savings, upon the new proposition of *those three ships only*, had the tender been accepted l. 40,215

Which savings would have apparently purchased 965,160 pounds of black teas at Canton at ten-pence per pound, which is considerably above two whole ships loading of charter party tonnage. This was the advantage rejected by refusing the late tender, and amply evinces how much more profitable the large ships are to the Company in the China trade, than the small ones are capable of being.

Once more, if we cast our eye back to the last years China ships only, I believe nineteen ships came home with surplus tonnage, on an average two hundred twenty tons above charter party; in that case, each ship brought six hundred thirty-nine tons.

Nineteen ships then brought 12,141	l. s. d.
tons, net goods (at 28 l. 7s. 1d. per ton, as appears in page 11)	amounts to
at — — —	l. s. d.
	28 7 1 344,247 18 9
Had the same been brought home at the price of the last tender, being	l. s. d.
Thus they had saved upon their whole cargo, at 7 l. 7s. 1d per ton	89,286 18 9
in that year on the China trade only, taking no notice	

notice of the Bengal and Bombay ships, all which admit of much better management.

Yet the present set of *leading Directors* do all they can to oppress these great ships, and to drive them out of the service, by refusing to do them common justice; having so contrived, that the small ships measuring but six hundred seventy six tons *, fitted out to sea for sixteen thousand pounds, are to have equal tonnage taken on board, as these large ships that measure eight hundred sixty-eight tons, and cost to sea twenty-four thousand pounds, which is one third more capital. Sure this is a gross partiality, and manifestly tends to prejudice the Company as well as the owners of the large shipping, who built them under the sanction of gentlemen in former directions, who were not influenced by the Black-Wall ship-builders †; but considered the interest of the Company, the superior defence of their property in time of war, the health and preservation of the seamen, soldiers, and passengers on long voyages, and the safety of the Company's cargoes in all respects.

It may be further observed, in order to shew how the Court of Directors mistook the interest of the Company, when they last ordered four China ships to remain in India (confessing thereby that four in the eleven were too many for

* The Ponsborne, Captain Hough, is only six hundred seventy-six tons. THIS WAS THE TWENTY-FOURTH SHIP TAKEN UP THIS YEAR.

† They have built no large ships there because they cannot dock them at Black-Wall, and for other reasons.

the trade of that year) and their cargoes to be laden on board the remaining seven ships, an equal quantity on each, big and little. Notwithstanding the paragraphs in the secretary's letter, dated the 13th of January 1773, (see page 25) wherein are the following words : “ That as the ships for China *are* dispatched, “ they cannot now alter the disposition made for “ the returning cargoes from thence.” I say, that notwithstanding this assertion, on the 27th of the same month, being *fourteen days after*, the Court of Directors did make an entire fresh disposition of the cargoes of that year, without availing themselves of the advantage of the tender lying upon the table, from the owners of the Royal Captain, Princess Royal, and the Prime, offering to bring home their lading at 21*l.* per ton. Let us examine, first, what is the cost to bring home the eleven ships lading, agreeable to the Directors plan, and then compare the same tonnage (see the next page) to be brought home, had they availed themselves of the benefit of the tender then before them; *viz.* To bring the eleven ships lading in the seven ships, an equal quantity in each ship, big or little, it would stand thus :

Tons

(16)

Tons		L. s. d.	L. s. d.
80 Iron Kentledge	at	9 13 4	is 773 6 8
11 China Ware		29 0 0	319 0 0
393 China and Silk		32 0 0	12,576 0 0
<hr/>			
484			13,668 6 8
15 Private Trade		32 0 0	480 0 0
80 Goods of double Kentledge Price	19 6 8		1,546 13 4
159 At half Freight		16 0 0	2,544 0 0
<hr/>			
738 One Ship's Freight			18,239 0 0
80 Deduct for Iron Kentledge	Multiplied by Nº of Ships		7
<hr/>			
658			127,673 0 0
7 Multiplied by the Number of Ships			
<hr/>			
4608			
3 A Fraction to be brought Home in any of the 7 Ships	at 16 0 0		48
<hr/>			
4609 * Tons cost bringing Home on the Directors last Plan		L. 127,721 0 0	
<hr/>			
Please to observe there are 4 small Ships and 3 large ones to come Home.			
It having been established in the Course of these Calculations that			
419 Net Tons, agreeable to Charter Party, amounts	L. s. d.		
to	14,148 6 8		
4 Consequently multiplied by the Number of small Ships lading, gives both Tonnage and Freight			4
<hr/>			
1676 The Charter Party Tonnage of 4 small Ships, whose Freight amounts to	56,593 6 8		
2933 Tons, had it been laden on Board the 3 great Ships, at £ 21 per Ton, would amount to	61,593 0 0		
<hr/>			
4609 * Tons cost bringing Home, had the Tender made by the 3 large Ships been accepted		L. 118,186 6 8	
<hr/>			
Thus certain leading Directors threw away, Jan. 27th last, the Sum of		L. 9,534 13 4	

By disposing improperly of the cargoes of the four ships ordered to stay in India till another year, by which means they gained a compleat victory over the great ships, and promoted the interest of the small ones, at the evident expence of the Company as above, and probably with a view to strengthen their own interest with certain small ship-owners against the 7th of April.

If all ships in the East-India Company's service were directed by Parliament to be taken up and chartered at the builder's tonnage, as ascertained by a certificate under the hands of the builder and the Company's surveyor of shipping, with leave to the Company to laden what more tonnage they may think proper, so such surplus did not endanger or incommod the safety of such ship, without paying any further freight for the same, it would then become an object of care to the Directors to station, and cause them to be laden home, with an eye to the Company's interest *only*; and would put a total end to the owners sollicitations about voyages, and leave the Directors free from many inconveniences; only care must be taken in that case, that no small ships are to go in the China trade, as they are not calculated for it.

There is certainly no occasion for ships at a great expence, outward-bound, to wait more than ten days at Deptford, ten days at Gravesend, and seven days in the Downs; from which place it is best to dispatch them, unless on extraordinary occasions they are ordered to Spithead;

head; but whenever that happens, it is attended with great expence, and often with delay.

All iron kentledge taken out and brought home by way of ballast, should be provided by the ship-owners, and the Company ought to pay nothing for it, in any shape; but as it is always the property of the owners, it should be considered as a necessary part of the ship stores.

Instead of so many various kinds of freight prices, it would be much fairer and better understood to have one clear price per ton, for each different place, to be regulated by the tenders, according to the price of stores, provisions, seamens wages, &c. annually. As little attention has been lately given to the punctual payment of freights, it seems reasonable, that from the time the freights become due according to the terms of the charter party, the Company should pay four per cent for the same, to the time of actual payment.

In page 13 of their printed charter-party it says " But nevertheless the said part owners shall not be charged with any sum of money in respect of goods damaged on board the said ship, either in her outward or homeward bound voyage, but such as shall by the condition and appearance of the package thereof, or by some other reasonable proof, appear to be ship damage, &c."

The better and more fairly to explain this passage, and to prevent any improper use to be made by a court of Directors of this great latitude given them, by which they may exercise their

their particular feelings to the interest of their friends, or rigidly from exercising their resentment to party prejudice, I would propose that for the sake of fair justice to all parties that paragraph should stand thus.

But nevertheless the said part owners shall not be charged with any sum of money in respect of goods damaged on board the said ship, either in her outward or homeward bound voyage, but such, as shall from reasonable proof appear to be owing to some evident defect in the said ship or vessel, or wilful neglect of the captain or officers commanding the same, any thing herein contained to the contrary thereof in any wise notwithstanding.

All freights outward bound exceeding three hundred and thirty-three tons (which is always carried gratis) to pay a certain freight per ton, as well taken out from England, as carried from port to port in India (before the payment of demorage takes place) ought in common justice to pay freight; which would exceedingly contribute towards preventing the Company's servants abroad from smuggling their own private trade from port to port in India, at the Company's expence; which opens a large field of illicit trade for the benefit of such servants abroad, as well as the commanders of ships, and ships company, and to the great injury of the proprietors at home.

To demonstrate how much more preferable this mode of chartering the ships is to the Company's interest, than the present charter party admits

admits of; I shall compare the present charter party's dead freight price, with the dead freight price now proposed; then compare the lowest price the Company have ever paid, under their present charter party, with the full benefit of surplus tonnage, with the surplus tonnage price now proposed, which the Directors will always have in their power, if they please to avail themselves of, by filling up the ship. To set this matter in a clear light :

Suppose a ship taken up or chartered at nine hundred and three tons (builders measure, at twenty five pounds nine shillings and four-pence per ton, that freight would amount to (with a fraction on the whole of seventy-two shillings, —————— l. 23,000 o o

As that ship would undoubtedly bring home at least eleven hundred tons (merchants measurement) which reckoned at twenty pounds eighteen shillings and two-pence per ton, with a fraction of 16s 8d makes the same freight up —————— l. 23,000 o o

In page 12 it appears the present charter party's dead freight price is —————— l. 33 15 4

The dead freight proposed as above is —————— l. 25 9 4

Gives a gain per ton of l. 8 6 0

In

In page 11, it appears the lowest price the present charter party has given the Company with surplus tonnage is — l. 28 7 4

The present surplus tonnage price (as in page 20) is — l. 20 18 2

This proposition gives a gain on every ton brought home from China of — — — l. 7 8 11

So that had this plan existed the last year, when nineteen ships came home with twelve thousand one hundred and forty one tons of goods, agreeable to the calculation in page 13, then there would have been an evident saving of ninety thousand three hundred and ninety nine pounds, seventeen shillings, and three-pence, in the article of freight on the China ships only in that single year.

From the public alteration I had with the two chairs at a late general court, it seems necessary I should take this opportunity to state my motives for the part I have taken in this very important business. I proceed to that point by saying, it is not easy for me to describe the very great surprize I was under when I heard, that contrary to express agreement with the Directors for surplus tonnage, without ever sending to us the owners of the large ships (who were only the great sufferers by this new regulation) there were orders given by the court of Directors for the 11 ships stationed to China to return dead freighted, which is charter party tonnage only. The freight of which was too inadequate to the heavy expence the owners of great ships

D had

had been at ; then it was I fully felt what I suspected was the intention for two years past in the conduct of the leading ships husbands from Blackwall (for there are leading ships husbands, as well as leading Directors, by whose help the poor Company has been led into her present distress) who had by the assistance of their good friends in the direction, at two different times, taken three pounds per ton from the great ships, (or what is the same thing from the China freights) and added that money to the freights of the lesser ships usually stationed to Bengal and Bombay ; the Blackwall ships being for particular reasons all small ones, from six hundred and thirty-seven tons to six hundred and seventy six. I say having now reduced the freights of the China ships as low as possible, under the assurance of surplus tonnage ; and that the great ships adapted to that trade, they (I mean the particular friends to *Blackwall*) seemed to rejoice exceedingly that the affairs of the Company gave them so favourable an opportunity to distress the great ships, by making them go for a freight that must evidently ruin them, though it certainly hurt their little ships in a small degree ;—that they did not mind, so ruin did but follow the great ships, which they viewed, as the only sure means of reducing the freights and the number of ships, so improper, expensive, and most injurious to the Company's interest. The exultation of some people at that time, was heard in every coffee-house, saying, *Now we shall see the great ships cut up, &c. &c.* This kind of state naturally begot in my mind a

re-

resentment, and resolution, which all men of good spirit will show on such very extraordinary occasions. I had 8 sixteenths of my own in the Royal Captain, my father had two more ; so that we had engaged for a large sum, much too great for men of common sense to trifle with. Finding Sir Abraham Hume and Sir Laurence Dundas deeply affected by the same cruel regulations, I resolved to exert myself, and I apprized them thereof ; they were both in the country ; something was to be done immediately, the dispatches for China being then going away. The next day I wrote the following tender to the court of Directors.

“ To the Honourable Court of Directors of the East India Company, Leadenhall-street.

“ Honourable Sirs,

“ YOUR late unexpected resolution, has made

“ a most extraordinary alteration in the affairs

“ of such ships as are stationed to China.

“ I acknowledge myself bound by charter

“ party, but any agreement may be dissolved

“ by consent of the contracting parties, for

“ mutual benefit.

“ I do therefore now propose to you a fresh

“ tender of my ship Royal Captain, and will

“ agree (provided you will direct to be laden

“ on board of her at China, as much goods as

“ she can conveniently carry) to bring home

“ the same at twenty guineas per ton, being

“ four guineas per ton less than you can have

" a cargo brought for from thence under every
 " possible advantage to the Company that the
 " present charter party can afford. And I do
 " hope, whatever may have been your motive
 " for your late resolution, that you will imme-
 " diately give my offer a deliberate considera-
 " tion. I am,

" Honourable Sirs,

" Your most obedient humble Servant,

" RICHARD HOTHAM."

Wednesday Morning,
 Jan. 13, 1773.

To which letter they made the following
 reply:

" To Sir RICHARD HOTHAM.

" SIR,

" HAVING laid before the Court of Di-
 " rectors your letter of this date, proposing a
 " fresh tender of the ship Royal Captain, and
 " to agree (provided the Court will direct to
 " be laden on that ship as much goods as she
 " can conveniently carry) to bring home the
 " same at twenty guineas per ton, being four
 " guineas per ton less than the Company can
 " have a cargo brought for from thence under
 " every possible advantage to them that the pre-
 " sent charter party can afford. I am ordered
 " by the same Court to acquaint you, that they
 " have given such your offer a deliberate con-
 " sideration,

" fideration, and that as the ships for China
 " are dispatched, they cannot now alter the
 " dispositions made for the returning cargoes
 " from thence.

" I am, SIR,

" Your most obedient humble Servant,

(Signed) " P. MITCHELL, Sec."

East-India House, 13th Jan.
 1773.

Then I made the material part of the foregoing calculations, and sent a copy of them to the chairman, and another to his deputy, accompanied with a letter to each, of which the following is a copy; the chairman never gave me any answer; the deputy's came in due time.

" SIR,

" FIRMLY believing that the extreme business you have upon your hands prevents you from seeing the advantage to the Company of the offer made you by the owners of the three great ships, Royal Captain, Princess Royal, and Prime, I take the liberty of asking your private attention to so advantageous an offer, because you may not perhaps see it in so strong a light as it really deserves. The inclosed are facts; let your proper clerks investigate, and refute them if they can; if they cannot, thus you are made privately sensible of their merit; your opinion on this

" im-

" important matter, before Wednesday, will
 " perhaps prevent me and the owners in the
 " other two ships any farther trouble in that
 " business, and of course give much satisfaction
 " to us all.

" I am, SIR,

" Your most obedient Servant,

" RICHARD HOTHAM."

Parliament-street, 18th

Jan. 1773.

To which the following answer was the next day received from Laurence Sullivan, Esq;

To Sir RICHARD HOTHAM.

" SIR,

" I AM not a little puzzled to give you an answer, because I had hitherto considered we were upon friendly terms—it is true that you ask my private opinion, but conveyed with what I feel as a menace, " that it may be the means of preventing a public application from you and others." This, added to some reflections which, in my present situation, gives me a considerable share, I cannot, consistent with my own character, say more, than that as I believe the Court of Directors mean to abide by their late resolutions; they will, if called upon, be obliged to explain their motives.

" If

" If it is your intentions that the calculate
transmitted me should be laid before the
Court of Directors, favour me with a single
line, and it shall be done instantly.

" I am, SIR,

" Your most humble Servant,

" LAURENCE SULLIVAN."

East-India House, 19th
Jan. 1773.

" To LAURENCE SULLIVAN, Esq.

" Deputy Chairman of the East-India Company.

" Sir,

" In answer to your letter, if we are not on
friendly terms, the fault is not mine.

" I do not mean any part of my former letter
as a menace; I meant to engage your attention
to the Company's interest, and in a fair manly
way to promote a common justice due to the
owners of the great ships; if, on these
terms, I can have your friendship, it will yet
be very agreeable to, Sir,

" Your most humble servant,

" RICHARD HOTHAM."

" P. S. You may lay the calculate before the
Court of Directors as soon as you please."

Parliament-street, Thursday,
Jan. 19, 1773;

This

This brought on a private conference, which I do not think I am at liberty to relate till that gentleman shall call on me so to do, when I shall certainly not decline it; but as the Deputy has caused to be exhibited the following paper of mine before a certain Committee, (though a private paper) I do think it right to exhibit it on this occasion, being conscious of no other meaning than what it fairly purports. It was sent under cover to Mr. Sulivan, to inforce the justice of doing something to alleviate the sufferings of the large ship-owners, which was desired to be returned, and is as follows:

" As the contract of all ships, big or little,
 " is first laid before the Court of Directors, and
 " when approved of, given to the Surveyor, to
 " be built under his direction, subject to every
 " rule and order such Directors shall think fit to
 " issue, there can be no possible fault found
 " by them, under their own regulations; conse-
 " quently there ought to be no preference, but
 " common justice is due to each kind of ship,
 " be they big or little. If then a general ca-
 " lamity visits the Company's affairs, an *equal*
 " *justice* is due from the Company to the owners
 " of both kinds of ships. To do that, it would
 " be only fair to state, that if a small ship of six
 " hundred and seventy-six tons, which cost
 " 16000*l.* to sea, being chartered at four hun-
 " dred and ninety-nine tons: a ship of eight
 " hundred and sixty-eight tons, which cost
 " 24000*l.* ought to be chartered at a pro-
 " portional tonnage, when the surplus (which
 " was clearly and specially agreed for) is, con-
 " trary

" trary to all former usage in the China trade,
 " taken forcibly away, which was always un-
 " derstood to be the reward for building such
 " large ships. To that end, an abatement was
 " made in the China freights, on a promise
 " given by the Court of Directors when the
 " freights were last settled, that such ships
 " should have full surplus tonnage. But as the
 " exigency of the Company's affairs require the
 " utmost frugality, all surplus tonnage has been
 " forbidden. Is it not highly reasonable, under
 " such unexpected regulation, that a proper at-
 " tention should be given by the Court of Direc-
 " tors to the case of the great ships? Common
 " justice surely demands it, so far as such owners
 " may not lose more than the owners of the small
 " ones do: As their capital is one third larger,
 " and their ships more profitable to the Com-
 " pany, there can be no shadow of reason why
 " they should suffer more in proportion than
 " others employed in the same service."

" If the Directors of the present time do not
 " see the Company's advantage in the same light
 " that former Directors did, who caused such
 " ships to be built; as honest men they ought to
 " feel the unmerited sufferings of such owners,
 " which now present themselves in so strong a
 " view; especially when they cast back their
 " eyes upon the late tender, made by the three
 " large ships now gone to China, at £.12 6s. 6d.
 " per ton less price than they at present are to
 " bring home tonnage of this year; viz.

Four thousand six hundred and nine tons, being eleven ships charter party tonnage, amounting at £. 14,130 6s. 8d. each, is £. 155,433 13 4

Four thousand six hundred and nine tons, agreeable to the tender at 21l. is - - - - £. 96,789 0 0

The amount to the Company of net gain on the China ships only, is - - - - £. 58,644 13 4

" But if the great ships are to meet with such marks of violence from the interest of the owners of the lesser ships, such owners will do well in time to view with proper attention the figures hereafter following. There they will see that having glass windows of their own, it ill becomes them to throw stones. To give one small picture of what may happen, should they persist in making a bleeding sacrifice of their own, as well as the other owner's interest; divide the ships into three classes; viz. say one ship builders tonnage eight hundred and sixty eight tons will bring one thousand and fifty tons; the second class of seven hundred and fifty tons will bring seven hundred and fifty tons; the third class of six hundred and seventy six tons will bring six hundred and thirty one tons.

1050	750	631
21	21	21
—	—	—
1050	750	631
2100	1500	1262
—	—	—

Freight of the present } 22050 — 2d class 15750 — 3d class 13251
tender of the large class }

Now

" Now suppose a necessity of bringing the
 " freights lower for the sake of opposition, try
 " it at eighteen pounds per ton, the three clas-
 " ses will stand thus :

" Large ship eighteen thousand nine hundred
 " pounds — second class thirteen thousand five
 " hundred pounds — the third eleven thousand
 " three hundred and fifty eight pounds.—Once
 " more let us reduce the freight price down
 " to what the great ships are compelled to go
 " for, then such general freight will be thirteen
 " pounds ten shillings or thereabouts ; at that
 " price the several classes will stand thus : the
 " great ship fourteen thousand one hundred and
 " seventy five pounds—the second ten thou-
 " sand one hundred and twenty five pounds—
 " the third eight thousand five hundred and
 " eighteen pounds ten shillings. No further
 " argument seems necessary to shew the inabi-
 " lity of the small ships to run down the large
 " ones : but a fair justice being now done by
 " taking up the large ships at a proportionable
 " tonnage*; considering the just proportion of
 " expence and size, all violence will cease, the
 " Company will be supplied in a beneficial way,
 " and all ships, big and little, employed in stations
 " suitable to their burdens, and each receive a
 " fair price as they ought for their labour."

These arguments had no weight with the Deputy Chairman, he really seemed to treat the owners of the large ships with a kind of disdainful exultation, which could not fail of begetting

* The Pitt in 1762 was taken up at a superior charter party tonnage, which ship was neither so large, so serviceable, or so safe as the present large ships confessedly are.

a manly resentment in the minds of the injured owners of the great ships. After all, there is no doubt but the money carelessly thrown away in improper freights only in the last twelve years, (yielding no advantage to any body but ship-builders, rope-makers, &c.) without reckoning a shilling of interest, greatly exceeds that sum we are now soliciting government to assist us with. As a proof, (in page 9) £128,842 13s. 4d. is moderately supposed to be the saving of one year, (far the least of many) evidently not more than a third of the preceding year's trade, which annual saving multiplied by twelve years, gives £,546,112L. The innumerable evils that want to be rooted out, crowd so upon my mind while I am writing, that I find much difficulty of stopping within the bounds I prescribed to myself when I sat down to give the Proprietors that information I was bound to by the common laws of society. I have endeavoured to steer as clear as possible from giving just offence on one hand to any man, or betraying an unmanly fear of any set of men on the other. I have not knowingly withheld any needful truth that has fallen within my own knowledge, therefore I hope for the approbation of the moderate and sensible stock-holders, who may perhaps be able to remedy their sufferings when properly apprized of the cause. The many strange abuses that have lately crept into the Company's affairs, both at home and abroad, have seemingly begot each other, and have daily increased beyond all conception; the end of which no man can foretel.

F I N I S.